THE STORY OF HALE CHAPEL AND ITS ANCESTRY.

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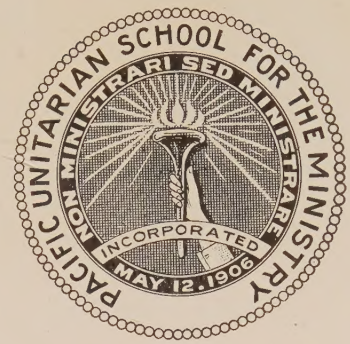

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THE STORY OF HALE CHAPEL AND ITS ANCESTRY.

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Hale Chapel and Sunday School, 1860.

THE STORY

OF

HALE CHAPEL

AND ITS ANCESTRY.

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Compiled by

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PREFACE.

OF original materials consulted for the following story the chief are: Registers of Bowdon Parish and Ringway Chapel; Licences under the Indulgence of 1672 at the Record Office (edited, with kindred matter, by George Lyon Turner, in "Original Records of Nonconformity," 1911-14); Minutes of the Cheshire Classis, 1691-1745 (edited by the present writer, in 1919); A quarto volume in manuscript, recording matters connected with Hale Chapel, 1720 to 1819; Deeds relating to Hale Chapel, in the possession of its Trustees; Hale and Altrincham Register, 1752-1836, at Somerset House.

For the earlier period, that of Ringey or Ringway Chapel, in addition to Bishop Francis Gastrell's "Notitia Cestrensis" (edited by Canon Raines for the Chetham Society, 1845); Sir Peter Leycester's "Historical Antiquities," 1673; George Ormerod's "History of the County Palatine and City of Chester" (edited by Thomas Helsby, 1882); and "Historical Sketches of Nonconformity in the County Palatine of Chester" (edited by William Urwick, 1864); the careful and extended researches embodied in articles contributed by Alfred Tarbolton to the *Altrincham, Bowdon and Hale Guardian*, in 1908 and 1923, the latter series reprinted in "Ringway Chapel before the Disruption" (September 1923) have furnished indispensable supplements to previous information on the subject; indeed, without the facts detailed in these articles the earlier portion of the present sketch could not have been completed.

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For the later period, that of Hale Chapel, acknowledgments are largely due to Charles Wallace's "History of Hale Chapel," in the *Christian Reformer*, 1852; to Joseph Crowther Hirst's "Hale Chapel," in *Light on the Way*, May 1895; to "Records of the Provincial Assembly," edited by George Eyre Evans, 1897; and to local information, contributed especially by Rev. John Moore of Hale.

The account of the Sunday School is practically a print, with slight revision, and some additions, of all material parts of a "Sketch" by Joseph Crowther Hirst, prepared for and read at the Centennial of the School in February 1888. Some further insight into the nature and purpose of the Sunday Schools of 1788 has been derived from the chapter on "Warrington's First Sunday School" in Arthur Mounfield's "Early Warrington Nonconformity," 1922.

The illustrations have been supplied mainly by Mr. Robert Harrop Wolff, who has been the Chapel Secretary for the last twenty-eight years.

A. G.

Ringway Chapel, 1886.

HALE CHAPEL.

CHARACTERISTIC of Lancashire and Cheshire in early days was the large extent of territory included in numerous cases within the bounds of a single parish, making it toilsome and inconvenient for distant parishioners to resort to the ministrations at the Mother Church. Hence came the wise provision of Chapels of ease, placed either adjacent to a magnate's mansion or in the heart of some well-populated locality. Many or most of these were ancient, and consecrated to the services of the Old Religion. Some few, at least in Lancashire, erected since the Reformation under Puritan auspices, were built by the inhabitants, and not consecrated. Instances may be mentioned at Atherton, and as early as 1618 at Toxteth Park. Yet, consecrated or not, many of these local Chapels came to be occupied by unconformable worshippers of Puritan type, and a few are still retained, rebuilt or enlarged, by their successors; e.g. Toxteth Park Chapel in Lancashire, and in Cheshire the ancient Chapel at Dukinfield Hall, once a Chapel of ease in Stockport parish. Being without endowment, these local Chapels were supported by voluntary contributions of worshippers, given to such ministers only, of whose services and principles they approved; and by these supporters they were held, until such time as a lord of the soil, who had turned away from Puritan ideas, reclaimed the building for the use of the Established Church.

There are those who maintain that the Puritans thus occupying these Chapels, were in this respect no better than thieves and robbers. Those who still adhere to the Old Religion have been known to use similar language respecting the occupancy of our ancient Churches by Protestants, who did not build them. It may suffice to remember that, in any case, Churches and Chapels are designed for the religious worship of the population about them, and this may vary, and has varied.

Bowdon appears in Domesday Book, with its church and priest. Hale also is recorded in Domesday Book, and in its description appears its "hay"; this may refer to the section described by F. R. Raines as "a lordship within a ring fence, belonging entirely to one proprietor." The fenced "hay" was employed as a place of custody for wild hogs and other wild animals. The name of this ringed-in lordship appears—not counting the obvious blunders, Romeleigh (1621) and Rugeley (1690)—in no less than thirteen forms, here given with the earliest date for each, known to the present writer, viz., Ringeye (1281), Ringeie (1281), Ryngehey (1482), Ringey (1577), Rungoe (1669), Ringhay (1691), Ringhey (1693), Ringaw (1717), Rungey (1717), Ringe (1720), Ringway (1723), Ryngey (1726), Rynjay (1730). The balance of frequency in early documents is in favour of Ringey, the form which, therefore, will be chiefly used in this narrative.

Ringey Chapel, dedicated to All Saints, was certainly consecrated. It was probably erected by an Earl of Derby. It does not appear to have been a mere Chapel of ease to Bowdon parish church, but a donative without endowment; and hence, as Thomas Whitaker, curate in charge from 1785 to 1818, writes in his register, "the dissenters might possess it by favour of the proprietor of the lordship." In its interior was, "since pulled down by ye Dissenters, an inscription in Latin & English: in whc the prayers of ye congregation were desird for ye soul of ye Earls of Derby deceasd. The year when this inscription was put up is still left in ye chappell & as I believe it one thousand five hundred & fifteen." So certifies Rev. Peter Lancaster, Vicar of Bowdon, on 18 May 1717. Writing a little later (1 June) he varies his account thus: "a Latin inscription by whc ye reader was desired to pray for ye soul of ye Earl of Derby; whc ye Dissenters not long since pulld down. The year when it was put up is left remaining & as I take it, its 1515." The date, thus tentatively given, must be wrong; in such inscriptions the date is always that of the death of the person prayed for. The first Earl of Derby, of the

Stanley line, died on 29 July 1504; the second Earl died on 23 May 1521. If the inscription was dated in Roman numerals, the figures IV may have been blurred, or the figures XXI have been broken, and in either case misread as XV. The story of the inscription has value as raising the presumption that the founder of the building was an Earl of Derby, and the date of its erection may be probably placed not later than 1500, the closing year of the fifteenth century.

Apart from this inscription, the only glimpse of the Old Religion at Ringey Chapel is in a list, dated 1541-2, of clergy in the then new diocese of Chester. Here JOHN COLIER appears as chantry priest in the Chapel of Ringeye. Equally scanty is our knowledge of its history in the first century after the Reformation. Peter Lancaster in 1717 tells us of an endowment of £12, for repairs and for the poor, left about 1617 by Smith of Davenport Green, a churchman, and writes vaguely of small legacies left later by Dissenters for the preaching Minister. He further certifies (18 May) that the Chapel bell "has upon it ye letters G.B. & is supposed to be given by Sir George Booth"; to this he adds (1 June) that on this bell "there are ye letters G.B. & ye year 1627, whc makes it probable that it was given by Sr George Booth, this present Ld. Warrington's great grandfather." The bell in question has eluded inquiry as to its fate; "when the chapel was removed in 1894 to make room for the present church," writes Mr. Alfred Tarbolton, "the bell then in the turret was dated 1741."

Ringey Chapel emerges into somewhat clearer light, or twilight, at the time of the Civil War and the subsequent Commonwealth. Sir Peter Leycester, writing in 1666, reports that "it was much frequented in the late War by Schismatical Ministers, and, as it were, a Receptacle for Non-Conformists." Bowdon parish was, during the Civil War, a scene of contention between the advocates of Presbyterianism and Independency. The Vicar of Bowdon, one SMITH, was sequestered in 1643, and his place filled by a preacher of Presbyterian sympathies. The Cheshire Attestation of 1648, which fulminated against Independency as

"the nurse if not the mother of many dangerous deviations both from truth and piety," was signed among others by "James Watmough, pastor of Bowden." Little else is known of him, but it is certain that he did not convert to Presbyterianism the whole of his parish. The contest with Independency was still going on in 1651 and later, as we learn from the autobiography of Adam Martindale, vicar of Rostherne from 1649 to 1662. It is reasonable to infer that Ringey Chapel got more or less into the hands of preachers at variance with the Parliamentary Presbyterianism.

Of these intruders or invaders, as strict churchmen deemed them, the name of one has survived. This was William Barrett, an Independent, who was here about 1650. Yet not as sole occupant of the pulpit; this was shared also by "Conformable Ministers." The Dissenters had been (then or later) at the expense of furnishing the Chapel with pews and a gallery, but they did not claim an exclusive use of the building. In the strict sense of the word they were not "schismatical." The main body of the Puritans were never Separatists on principle. They desired to remain within the National Church, abating certain forms, to the use of which their consciences demurred. In the histories of the Chapels to which they introduced Ministers of their own type of belief and discipline, we constantly find that opportunity was given, when occasion arose, for the services of conforming clergy. If they did not themselves employ the aid of the Prayer-book, they provided one—as at Atherton—to be ready in the desk, for the use of a Minister who did.

From the Restoration in 1660 till James II's Declaration for Liberty of Conscience in 1687, we are told that none but Conformable Ministers were admitted at Ringey Chapel. Against this general statement has been set the memorandum by Bishop Gastrell that John Brereton, M.A., was Minister here in 1662; but there is no contradiction in this. Brereton, a University man, in episcopal orders, was ejected from the rectory of Wilmslow in 1660, for no personal disqualification, but simply because this was a sequestered living, and

Rev. Ralph Harrison
(1767—1769).

Thomas Wright, the old rector (who survived till 26 Oct. 1661) was restored. There was nothing to prevent Brereton from being at once appointed to Ringey Chapel, if it were vacant, and nothing to oust him from it till the new Uniformity Act came into force on 24 August 1662. Then, no doubt, he would be ejected as Nonconforming. He did not, however, leave the neighbourhood. He may still have ministered to his Ringey friends, as others did to theirs, in the scattered fashion which the Conventicle Acts allowed; four of them at a time, in addition to the regular household, and these small meetings held continuously from day to day. Nay, we find he did more than this. The cession of the Chapel to Ministers conforming was not so complete as has been said; for the Episcopal returns of 1669 report from Bowdon parish, "A Meeting of Nonconformists att Rungoe Chappell to a very great number." How long this lasted, we do not know; but on the issue of Charles II's Declaration of Indulgence (March 1672) application was made for "A Licence for John Brereton Clerke and maister of Arts of the presbiterian Persuation to preach at his Owne howse at Castle Hill in ye Parish of Bowden in the County of Chesshire"; licences accordingly, for preacher and place, were granted on 22 May 1672. Thus, whether he had use of the Chapel or not, Brereton had a place wherein to minister to the Ringey flock, till Indulgence was quashed in March 1673. Unfortunately our knowledge of him does not extend beyond the above date in 1672.

Of the conforming Ministers regularly ministering at Ringey Chapel in this period, we know but one; this was George Hatton, in and about 1681. Others, e.g. John Yates and John Taylor, rendered occasional services.

Many reasons may be given for condemning Charles II, whether as a human being or as a sovereign, but to hold him personally guilty of the oppressive legislation against Nonconformists is to mistake the man. His attitude toward the religious question differed little from that of Cromwell; if a man was ready to be a good subject, that was enough; but his successive schemes of Indulgence were frustrated by

Parliament. James II, on the contrary, at the outset of his Declaration for Liberty of Conscience, made public his desire that all his subjects should become Catholics; his project failed, he had pitted himself not merely against Parliamentary opinion, but against the whole force of the popular sense of truth and love of liberty. In effect, he awoke a new appetite for freedom; it was aroused at Ringey, as elsewhere, and Lancaster judged rightly when he wrote in 1717 that it was "upon ye toleration in King James ye Second's time" that the Dissenters again got the Chapel into their hands, "& have ever since kept possession of it."

The Minister whom they then put into it was Robert Moseley, M.A., a graduate of both Universities, very rich, and childless. We find him in 1672, when he was 50 years of age, living and ministering in the High Peak district of Derbyshire, and "carrying his labour into other Counties." He was at Ringey "before 1690," and we may fairly assume that he was settled there as early as 1688. His stay was not of long duration, for he removed to Mellor Chapel; his connection with Ringey ending on 28 Sept. 1692. At Mellor Chapel he was buried, on 25 Nov. 1701. The burial register describes him as "clericus," which should mean that he was in episcopal orders. He is accused of giving annoyance, not only by baptising, but also by marrying persons at Ringey; this, if in episcopal orders, he was, in the then state of the law, quite entitled to do.

Though brief, his ministry at Ringey was marked by an event of moment, the inclusion of Ringey through its Minister in the Cheshire Classis, a ministerial body, formed on the model of the London "Happy Union" of 1690, whose members resolved to discard the distinguishing names, Presbyterian and Congregational, to adopt a common discipline, and henceforth to be known as United Ministers or United Brethren. The "Heads of Agreement" to this effect, drawn up by John Howe, were adopted and subscribed at Dean Row in April 1691, and among the signatures is that of "R. Moseley at Ringhay." It will be observed that this Classis consisted exclusively of clergy. Cheshire had

never admitted the Presbyterian organisation, in which the laity are represented—in numerical preponderance, according to the Parliamentary Presbyterianism—in every church court. Having no lay representation, the Cheshire Classis could exercise no jurisdiction. It was an advisory body in pastoral and congregational difficulties; and having control of Ordination, its influence on the fortunes of the community which came under its wing was, both doctrinally and otherwise, very great.

As Moseley's ministry was not limited to Ringey, he applied to the Classis for advice as to administering the Lord's Supper to his groups of communicants, and "was advised to administer it in one fixed place, and to desire his friends to resort thither." Probably his chosen "fixed place" was Mellor Chapel. Further, in pursuance of the Agreement, the question of "Mer Robert Moseley's removal from Ringhay Chappel to Mellor Chappel" was referred to the Classis on 24 May 1692. The main points decided by the Classis were that Moseley was to remain in charge till his successor was ordained, and that if any of the congregation objected to his removal, their views were to be considered. It was due to the prudent course taken by the Classis that all things went smoothly.

William Dearniley was the choice of the congregation. He entered at Richard Frankland's famous Academy in 1687. It appears that he had a small fortune of £23 a year. We find him ministering at Kendal, as a licenciate, in 1690, and in 1692 he was in the care of the Manchester Classis. He preached five Sundays at Ringey Chapel, and received a unanimous call, testified by 50 signatures. His Ordination by the Cheshire Classis took place at Knutsford on 28 Sept. 1692. On the previous day he read a Latin thesis on the question: "Does Christ's obedience do away with Christian obedience?" His thesis of course was decidedly in the negative, for the Classis was wholly against what was called the "antinomian" side in the then prevalent Crispian controversy; and no Classis would admit a

thesis which advocated what it considered a wrong conclusion. Still, he had to defend his thesis in a Latin disputation with Thomas Risley, an old Oxford Fellow, as his formidable "objector," not as controverting his conclusion, but as picking holes in his logic and argument. He got through, and then was examined in "the Tongues" (Hebrew and Greek), in "philosophy &c." At the actual Ordination he made confession of faith, and declared the "ends and reasons" of his choosing the ministerial function. Matthew Henry, who was one of the ordainers, records the occasion as "a good day."

Dearniley's ministry was a successful one. In 1696 he had a pressing and unanimous call to Warrington, but pleaded with the Classis to allow him to decline it, "being abundantly satisfied in his present sphœre of Usefulness, though narrow, and foreseeing great Inconveniences to his present Charge if he should remove."

It appears that some of the baptisms by Dearniley (in 1696 and 1698) are entered in the Bowdon parish register. This, though by no means common, is not without precedent. Indeed in some church registers (e.g. one at Shrewsbury) there is a special place for baptisms by Dissenters.

Dearniley remained constant to his work at Ringey till his early death (28 May 1701) deprived the Classis of one whom its minutes describe as "a person of great worth . . . of very good natural parts and a Considerable scholar, of sober and Moderate principles and a blameless & Exemplary Conversation, Polite and accurate in his Composures and Performances, but Extraordinary for his humility, Modesty, and fidelity in friendship." So writes Samuel Low, scribe to the Classis; adding that besides his funeral sermon (at Knutsford, where his tombstone may still be seen) there was another to his own people on the following Sunday at Ringey; for both of these, in accordance with an old custom not yet entirely died out, he had himself selected the texts, viz. Jer. xxiii, 36 (a strange text) and Heb. xiii, 1 (a fine counsel to his old flock).

Rev. Robert Harrop
(1769—1815).

Nicholas Waterhouse (we have no record of his ministerial training) was a young licenciate who had frequently done duty for Dearniley, during his last illness, evidently with acceptance, for the congregation lost no time in giving him a unanimous Call. His ministry began then in 1701, and he was ordained pastor by the Cheshire Classis at Warrington, with seven other licenciates, on 16 June 1702. The congregation continued to flourish under his care; an additional building was added to the Meeting-house. Contributions to the Minister's maintenance were, however, not excessive, for in 1713 the London Fund made him a yearly grant of £4. The returns, in 1717, from Cheshire in Evans' List show an estimate of 400 hearers, including 27 gentry, 63 yeomen, 40 tradesmen and 50 labourers; and the congregation mustered the large number of 96 county voters. Baptisms by Waterhouse are entered in the Bowdon parish register between 1713 and 1718.

Now comes a reverse to the Nonconformists as regards their occupancy of Ringey Chapel. John Crewe, lord of the manor, who had been their friend, died in 1684. His eldest daughter, Anne, who became sole heir to his estate, was likewise their friend; she died in 1711. She had married John Offley, and left a son, John Crewe Offley, who, however, had by statute in 1708 dropped the name Offley, and was simply John Crewe. Thomas Whitaker, curate in charge from 1785 to 1818, writes in his register book that this John Crewe, on coming to the estate, "declared his intention of restoring the Chapel to the Established Church."

Clearly this intention became imminent in the course of 1719. At the outset of the following year, the congregation drew up an account of its claims and resources under the following heading in the handwriting of Isaack Newton:

> A true account of what we the severall members that Ordinarily compose the Congregation of Protestant Dissenters at Ringey Chappell in Hale, or we who Claim any right to seat or seats therein: Do promise to contribute quarterly Half-yearly or yearly towards the mentainance of our Present Minister, During our Attendance their, or our Claiming any seate or seates their; As Given under Our hands, or promised in ye Presence of us whose names are Hereunto subscribed In ye year 1719=20.

There follow, from Hale, 55 names, headed by Richard Leather; from Etchells and thereabouts, 24 names; from Mobberley and Ashley, 16 names; making 95 names in all. Not all the signatures are autograph, one (perhaps of an illiterate) is in the neat hand of Isaack Newton, contrasting curiously with the sturdy scrawls on the same page. The highest contribution, 5/- a quarter, is by William Royle; the next, 4/-, is by Josiah Warburton; the other quarterly contributions are of 2/-, 1/6, 1/-, 10d., 9d., 6d., and 3d. The Hale quarterage comes to a little over £2: 1: 7 (a corner of one page being lost); that for Etchells a little over 13/6 (for the same reason), for Mobberley and Ashley, 14/3; making a yearly income of about £14. Not much for Waterhouse, but he was soon to be better off.

This tabling of their expectations in members and money by the stalwarts of Dissent at Ringey bears witness to a fact of which there are other indications, namely that of the 400 hearers, a considerable number were siding with the landlord. Comparing the subsequent registers of Ringey and Hale, we see evidence of marked division of family names; Whiteleggs and Hankinsons and others appear conspicuously in both records. Some small endowments, of Puritan origin, stayed at Ringey.

The circumstance of the actual division is best narrated by Whitaker (above) as given to him by "John Houghton Esq, of Baguley, in Feb. 1794, when he was near 84 years of age." Houghton in 1720 would be under ten, but sharp boys have long memories for local story. This is the story: "The circumstance is this: ——— [Thomas] Ashley Esq., of Ashley Hall, who seldom went to any place of worship, presuming upon Mr. Crewe's connivance, took it into his head to disturb the Dissenters at Ringway. He came to the Chapel one Sunday attended by a number of servants, and seized Mr. Waterhouse by the collar, pulled him down from the pulpit, turned him and the congregation out of the Chapel, and locked up the doors. The Dissenters, however, became repossessed of the Chapel the week following and continued in it without molestation till it was augmented by

the Governors of Queen Anne's Bounty, when it became a regular Chapel by Stat. I, Geo. I. [really 1 Geo. I. Stat. 2, Cap. 10] and then a clergyman licensed by the bishop took possession of it. On the Sunday when he first came, the Dissenters had begun their worship, the clergyman sat down as a hearer, desired them to go on and finish their service, and he took possession of it in form in the afternoon. Mr. Waterhouse afterwards preached in a barn [a thatched building, standing till 1897] at the Ashes farm, near the Chapel, till a Dissenting Meeting-house was erected in Hale, in the year 1723." The actual date of the final eviction, not here given, is usually reckoned 1721; the evidence of the account book renders an early date in 1722 more likely.

In 1722 the last payment of £4 was made to Waterhouse by the London Fund, "he having a good estate." How this had come to him, we are not told.

When exactly the building of the Meeting-house was begun, does not appear, but by the middle of 1723 it was in process of completion. The "Feoffment Deed of a piece of land in Hale designed to erect a Chapel upon" is dated 4 July 1723. Richard Leather, of Hale, yeoman, for the sum of £5 sells to thirteen persons a piece of land lying in "a certain close or field, called or known by the name of the Butts alias the Buttsfield," lying between Hale Barns and Warburton Green, "near a certain pitt in the same close," and "containing ten perches of land of large Cheshire measure,"

The purchasers are:

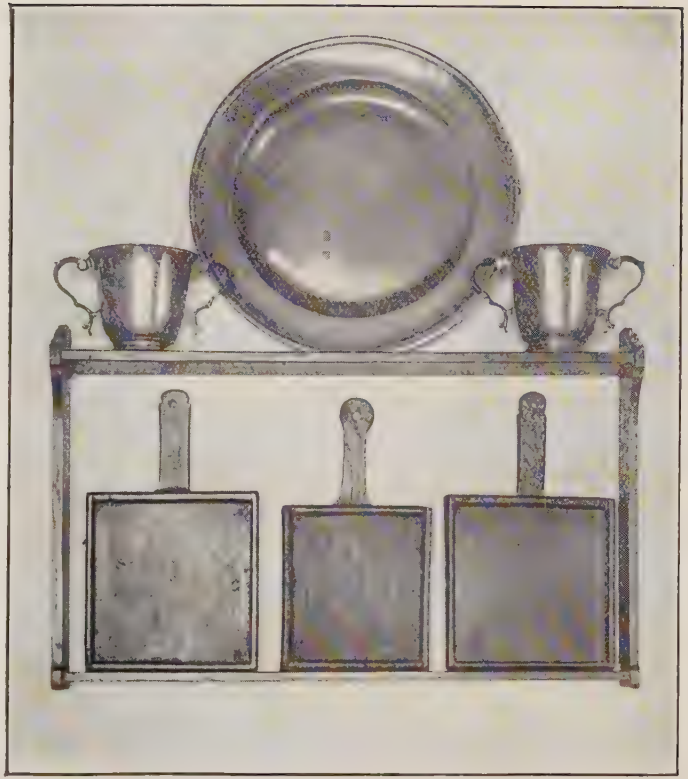
Nicholas Waterhouse, of Bowdon, clerk.
Will^m^ Royle, of Hale, shoemaker.
John Coppock, of Hale, tanner.
James Hardey, of Altrincham, yeoman.
Benjamin Whitelegg, of Hale, tanner.
Josiah Hankinson, of Hale, tanner.
Henry Burgess, of Mobberly, yeoman.
Henry Gibbon, of Echells, yeoman.

Thomas Johnson, of Hale, yeoman.
John Warburton, son of Josiah Warburton, of Hale, yeoman.
Joseph Coppock, of Castle Hill within Hale, yeoman.
Richard Jackson, of Astley [Ashley], yeoman.
John Royle, of Hale, yeoman.

A chief rent of half-a-crown a year, payable on the Feast of John the Baptist (23 June) was reserved by Leather.

On 16 July 1723 the "new Erected Building in Buttsfield in Hale" was registered at the Quarter Sessions at Nantwich as "Intended for a place of Divine and religious worship." The building had two entrance doors in the South wall, long since walled-up, and replaced by the present entrance in the East gable. The formal opening, however, was in the following October, when sermons were preached by two local divines, Charles Owen, D.D. (Edin. 1728) and Hugh Worthington. Owen had been chosen at Warrington on the refusal of Dearniley, and for him Sankey [Cairo] Street Chapel was built (1698); he was a facile preacher, with no "servile Dependance" on manuscript, the "Reading of Sermons in the Pulpit," he says, "is scarcely used anywhere in the Christian world this day, except England and the Russian Church." Worthington had at Dean Row by far the largest congregation in the county; the 1717 returns give him 1309 hearers, with 142 county voters among them.

Great stress was laid on the ordinance of the Lord's Supper by this, as by kindred congregations. Usually the service of Communion was monthly; at Hale it was bi-monthly, throughout the period covered by the manuscript record, 1720 to 1819; not improbably this originated in the option of communicating at Ringey Chapel in the alternate months. In the possession of the congregation are two pewter cups, and a pewter paten, uninscribed, but believed to have been in use from the first, and till the beginning of the nineteenth century, when they were superseded, as the following entries in the same record testify:



The old Communion Vessels and Offertory Boxes.

The Old Vestry and Stable.

June 11th 1801 Memorandum. Mr. John Worthington of Altrincham has made a Present to the Congregation of Two very elegant Silver-Cups for the Communion Service.

November 4th 1804 Memorandum. Mr. Worthington of Altrincham has made a Present to the Congregation of a very elegant Silver Dish for the Communion Service.

Waterhouse did not long survive to enjoy his "good estate" or to minister in the new place of worship. He died on 6 June 1724; his body lies in Bowdon churchyard.

Radcliffe Scholefield was his successor. He was son of Radcliffe Scholefield, attorney, of Scholefield Hall, Rochdale. He had entered Frankland's Academy in 1688, and from 1718 had been Minister at Whitworth, in Rochdale parish. He seems to have taken Hale as an additional charge, for he appears as a Cheshire Minister in 1725, but he did not leave Whitworth and remove to Hale till 1727. "Two Lettrs from some of the Congregation at Hale Relating to Mr. Scolefield," which the Classis record without disclosing their contents, may have had reference to this. His ministry had no long continuance; he died near Ratcliffe Bridge, Lanc., and was buried on 16 Aug. 1728.

His son, Richard (d. 1740) succeeded his father as Minister at Whitworth, and had a son Radcliffe (1733-1803), who was Minister, first at Whitehaven, and then at the Old Meeting, Birmingham.

George Hardy, who succeeded him, first appears as an English student at Glasgow in 1726. He may have been (like George Whitelegg, the arrangements for whose ordination were superseded by his early death in June 1739) a native of Hale, where the name George Hardy appears in the earliest lists. He took no degree, but a deputation of the Classis went to Manchester to examine him there for licence on 4 Sept. 1728. His licence of that date is the only one given in full, signed by the six examiners. His ministry at Hale begins from that year, and ends at the close of 1730. He then, having apparently received ordination, went south,

ministering successively at Prince's Risborough, at Cambridge, and at Farnham, till he left the ministry in 1756. He had one grant (£5) before he left Hale, from the London Fund, and frequent grants later.

The ministry of Silas Sidebottom, who followed Hardy, was one of much importance in the history of Hale. Born in 1681, Sidebottom was an alumnus of Timothy Jollie's Academy at Attercliffe, an offshoot from Frankland's at Rathmel. Unlike Frankland, Jollie was an Independent; Unlike him, also, he excluded from his Academy the teaching of Mathematics—a term covering what was then known of physical science—as "tending to scepticism"; yet one of his scholars was advanced to a mathematical chair at Cambridge. Under Jollie's training, his pupils imbibed a strict theology and developed real preaching power and much force of character; conspicuous among them was Dr. Benjamin Grosvenor, a strong Calvinist and an equally strong advocate of religious liberty. At the age of 25, Sidebottom, already licensed by Jollie, was ordained at Knutsford by the Cheshire Classis on 6 Aug. 1706. The topic of his Latin thesis is interesting: "Has the human soul an active existence in its state of separation from the body?" His first ministry (from 1704) was at Wheelock Heath Chapel, erected in that year; he was assiduous in his attendance at the Classis, and in 1722 and 1724 was its Moderator. Being thus well known in the district, he was chosen in 1731 to succeed Hardy, and in the same year was again Moderator.

In the second year of his ministry, Hale Chapel was put in trust. The deed is dated 22 June 1732, and the trust is for "a meeting house or place of religious worship for the use and service of Protestant Subjects of the Presbiterian perswasion Dissenters from the Church of England." Should Toleration cease, the Trustees are to devote the profits of sale or rent of the building to pious and charitable uses at discretion. Should any Trustee "separate himself from the publick Worship and Discipline taught and professed by the Presbiterian protestant Dissenters and embrace the discipline and worship of any other Church or religious profession or

shall withdraw his contribution from Silas Sidebottom Clerk . . . . or any of his Successors officiating Ministers," then shall he cease to be Trustee, as if he were dead. Future Trustees are to be " elected and chosen by the majority of the communicating members attending divine Worship at the Meeting house."

Though the building, as we have seen, was known as Hale Chapel, the term Chapel, used in many of the old trust deeds, does not occur in this. The provisions of the Hale trust were in the nature of a common form. Most of them were taken bodily, even to the spelling, into those of the Dean Row trust, dated 5 Nov. 1750. Strictly speaking, the term Chapel was applied to those Nonconformist buildings which represented a parochial Chapel from which Nonconformists had been evicted, and these buildings were furnished with a bell, as was the case at Hale. The general use of the term Chapel by Dissenters seems to have originated with the Methodists; Wesley called his preaching-houses Chapels, as being subsidiary to the National Church, from which (like Baxter) he claimed never to have separated. The older term Meeting-house, abbreviated to Meeting, is still in use at Birmingham, Coventry, Leicester &c., though the tendency now is to call every Meeting-house a Church.

Perhaps the use of the denomination " Presbiterian," though this had been renounced by the Classis, may require some explanation. It was not a recurrence to Commonwealth ideas, for Cheshire (unlike Lancashire) had never adopted the Parliamentary Presbyterianism; but Presbyterian was a sort of synonym for loyal Nonconformity, Independent being viewed as suggestive of disloyalty. The London Fund, which aided the Cheshire congregations, had since the formation of a Congregational Fund (in 1695) come to be generally known as Presbyterian, though in origin it was common to both denominations; and as this Fund was administered with a generous breadth in matter of doctrine, Presbyterian came to be synonymous with Tolerant Dissent, and as such it was understood in Cheshire.

Having placed Hale Chapel in trust, the next thing was for the congregation to organise itself by a body of regulations. This they proceeded to do on the very day after the settlement of the trust deed. Here is the document, in the handwriting of John Coppock, Scribe:

June y^e^ 23^d^ 1732

Rules and Resolutions then Laid down and agreed upon by the Trustees at Hale Will^m^ Ryle John Coppocke Benj^n^ Whitelegg Josiah Hankinson Tho^s^ Johnson John Warburton John Ryle Will^m^ Whitelegg Joseph Mooers John Hankinson sen^r^ John Hankinson jun^r^ Henry Burges Peirson Burges Mathew Leigh Rob^t^ Walker Charles Bleirs Charles Astle Josiah Warburton George fletcher George Warburton George Whitelegg

(1) That every Person or Familly shall have and enjoy theire seats or Pews them and theirs after them paying Quarterly to y^e^ use of y^e^ Minister then being for such seat or pew as shall be hereafter determined by A majority of y^e^ Trustees—

(2) Tis agreed that y^e^ Rates of Each Pew Containing six seats shall be quarterly as follows ℔ seat

numb^r^ & value			numb^r^ & value			numb^r^ & value		
	s.	d.		s.	d.		s.	d.
first	0	6	Twelve	1	0	Twenty=third...	0	10
second	0	8	Thirteen	1	0	Twenty fourth..	0	10
Third	0	10	fourteen	0	10	Twenty fifth ...	0	6
fourth	1	0	fifteen	0	8	Twenty sixth ...	0	6
fifth	1	0	Sixteen	0	6	Twenty seventh	0	10
sixth	1	0	Seventeen	0	6	Twenty Eighth.	0	10
seventh	1	0	Eighteen	0	6	Twenty Nineth.	0	10
Eight	1	0	Nineteen	0	8	Thirty	0	10
Nine	1	0	Twenty	0	9	Thirty-first	0	8
Ten	1	0	Twenty first ...	0	9	Thirty-second...	0	6
Eleven	1	0	Twenty second	0	10	Thirty-third ...	0	6

(3) That in Case any Person withhold or withdraw y^e^ stipulated Rate of pew or seat y^e^ Trustees then being may place other persons in such pew or seats.

(4) That in Case any Controversy or debate arise amongst y^e^ Trustees it shall be decided by y^e^ mejority, and in Case of an equall devision by y^e^ Minister then being.

Rev. James T. Whitehead

Rev. Edward S. Howse

(5) That all y^e^ Trustees have an equal right to debate and give their opinion and vote in any publick and weighty affair relating to y^e^ Meeting=House or Congregation at Hale.

(6) It is agreed unto for y^e^ better management of y^e^ common and ordinary affairs relating to y^e^ Minister and Congregation y^t^ a Comittee of seven persons be nominated and appoined to y^t^ end.

(7) That y^e^ Persons fixt upon for y^e^ present be (Will^m^ Ryle John Ryle Benj^n^ Whitelegg Tho^s^ Johnson John Hankinson sen^r^ Will^m^ Whitelegg Jun^r^ John Coppocke Scribe) to be changed altered or y^e^ number filled up as occasion shall require and y^e^ majority of all y^e^ Trustees then being shall see cause for.

(8) In case of y^e^ Removall or Death of a Minister, it is resolved and agreed, y^t^ a new Minister shall from time to time be Chosen by y^e^ majority of y^e^ Communicants and contributors at Hale.

(9) That a Book shall be kept by y^e^ committee and all Church affairs belonging to y^e^ Minister and Congregation be incered from time to time in it, to be Inspected yearly by all or any of y^e^ Trustees, and it is agreed unto y^t^ y^e^ above Rules and Resolutions should be Incerted and subscribed in y^e^ beginning of this Book by y^e^ Trustees.

William Royle	Josiah Hankinson	Pearson Burges
John Royle	Cha^s^ Blair	Charles Astley
Benjamin Whiteleg	Josiah Warburton	George Whiteleg
John Warburton	W^m^ Whitelegg	George Fletcher
Thomas Johnson	Matthew Leigh	Henry Burges
John Hankinson	Joseph Moor's	John Coppocke
John Hankinson	George Warburton	Robert Walker

Here there is nothing deserving of particular remark save the tribute to Sidebottom's impartial judgment conveyed in the Rule that when Trustees were equally divided on a matter, the Minister should decide.

Promotion of popular education was always a prominent aim with the Nonconformist ministry. Sidebottom did not

himself become a schoolmaster, like his neighbour William Turner, of Allostock. He did more. In 1740 he founded the Day School at Hale, "purchased the land, caused a Schoolhouse to be erected upon it, and conveyed it to Trustees (the same Trustees as those of Hale Chapel)." This School was the forerunner of the Sunday School to be mentioned later.

Sidebottom, who had reached his sixty-sixth year, died in September 1747, and was buried on the 19th of that month. Like Dearniley, his predecessor, he was interred beneath the floor of Knutsford Chapel, where his tombstone remains, not far from the right-hand entrance porch.

Hugh Worthington, M.A., son of the preacher at the opening of Hale Chapel, was the next Minister. Though the age of entrance at a Scottish University was often a very early one (Dr. Chalmers entered at St. Andrews at the age of eleven) Worthington, born in 1711, must have been a precocious scholar. Well-grounded by his father, he went first to Dr. Latham's Academy at Findern. This Academy had no high repute; Worthington's stay must have been very short. Proceeding to Glasgow, he graduated there on 30 Dec. 1725, when he could not have reached his 15th year. Greek in Scotland was then a monopoly of the Universities, and if an English lad came up, equipped in Greek (as we may believe Worthington had been, by his father) his graduation was easy. Having taken his M.A., Worthington signed on for divinity, on 10 Jan. 1726, along with Samuel Eaton (afterwards D.D.) who had been with him at his father's school.

The divinity professor, John Simson, M.A., had been twice tried for heresy; first for making too much of the light of nature, and holding that the moon was inhabited; and again for scattering doubts on the doctrine of the Trinity by attempting to establish it on a reasonable basis. On both trials he was found orthodox, but his teaching was "not necessary" and "subversive"; hence, in 1728, he was suspended from teaching, though retaining the emoluments of his chair. Several of the Cheshire Ministers, in addition to

the above, had been his pupils, and the effect of his lectures on them, as on his numerous pupils from the North of Ireland, was to turn their thoughts in an Arian direction. Sidebottom's theology had certainly advanced no further than to tolerate Baxterian and Arminian views, while holding to his Calvinism. His successor, as certainly, advanced to the Arian position.

Worthington, licensed by the Cheshire Classis in 1726, became Minister at Leek in 1728, and was ordained to that charge, at the age of 19, by the Cheshire Classis at Knutsford on 1 Sept. 1730. His Latin thesis was "On the necessity for a supernatural revelation." At the end of 1735 he succeeded his father at Dean Row, and preached his last sermon there on 11 Sept. 1748. Thereafter he was Minister at Hale Chapel till his retirement from the ministry in 1767. He removed to Mobberley, and thence to Wilmslow, where he died on 31 May 1773, and was buried in Dean Row Chapel. He left a son, Philip.

It may be suspected that at Hale, as elsewhere, the introduction of Arianism had the effect of alienating the popular element in the congregation. Worthington's vacant place was filled for a time by a student.

During Worthington's ministry, the Cheshire Classis, reduced in strength, lost its identity, and fell in with the Lancashire Provincial Meeting. This was on 18 June 1765; and the occasion was the invitation to the Cheshire Ministers to join in the establishment of a Widows' Fund Association, projected in 1762 by Joseph Priestley, lately of Nantwich, then at Warrington Academy. The scheme was launched on 16 May 1764, and on 19 June the Cheshire Classis agreed to discontinue their meeting at Knutsford, and meet yearly at Warrington for transaction of the business of the Widows' Fund. This, for many years, was the sole business of the conjoint Meeting. Ultimately the Province—originally limited to Lancashire, being a relic of the Lancashire Provincial Assembly of the Parliamentary Presbyterianism—was extended to include Cheshire, the Cheshire Ministers, as members of the Widows' Fund, being accepted as part and

parcel of the Provincial Meeting. Its present official title, "Provincial Assembly of Presbyterian and Unitarian Ministers and Congregations in Lancashire and Cheshire," dates from 1842; its present constitution, which includes a lay representation, dates from 1856.

Ralph Harrison was born on 10 Sept. 1748 at Chinley, Derb., where his father, William Harrison, M.A. Edin. (grandson of Cuthbert Harrison, B.A., ejected from Lurgan, Co. Armagh), was then Minister. His mother was Anne, daughter of John Cooper, the first Minister at Hyde Chapel, Gee Cross, and granddaughter of Samuel Angier, first Minister of Dukinfield. Young Harrison was educated at the Warrington Academy, entering in 1763 under John Aikin, D.D., and while there, when just 19, he became the regular preacher in charge of Hale Chapel, either officiating himself, or (as appears from the diary of John Worthington, of the Outwood) sending others in his stead. Many of the smaller congregations within the compass of the Provincial Meeting were in like manner kept going by Warrington Students. In a brief autobiographical manuscript Harrison says: "I had the care of Hale from the latter end of 1767 to the middle of 1769." That he was fully accepted by the congregation as their Minister is evidenced by the fact that, in the renewed Trust Deed of 17 May 1769, the clause disqualifying recreant Trustees (see p. 14) now runs: "or shall withdraw his contribution from Ralph Harrison, Clerk &c," and this though his charge was just about to close. From the renewed Trust Deed of 30 Dec. 1814 both disqualifying clauses are omitted.

In his later career Harrison, after a brief ministry at Shrewsbury, was the well-known Minister, for thirty-nine years, of Cross Street Chapel, Manchester, where he succeeded Joseph Mottershead on 17 Nov. 1771, and remained in charge till 1811, surviving his colleague Thomas Barnes, D.D. Probably Harrison is best known to-day as the composer of the hymn tune "Warrington." Harrison, like Barnes, was an Arian, but the successor to Barnes at Cross

Hale Chapel, 1923
(Exterior).

Hale Chapel, 1923
(Interior).

Street, John Grundy, was a stalwart Unitarian, the follower and friend of Thomas Belsham.

At this point it may be desirable to notice a curious letter addressed by Timothy Priestley from Manchester to William Whitelegg, senior, of Hale Barns Green. Timothy, the eccentric and Calvinistic brother of Dr. Joseph Priestley, was a Congregational Minister in Manchester from early in 1766 till his dismissal on 14 April 1784. The letter is undated, but its contents place it definitely at some point in the period 1767-9. There is no indication of Timothy Priestley's personal knowledge of Whitelegg, and indeed the letter is addressed to him not in his individual but his representative capacity. The letter, which is long and rambling, opens with the statement that Timothy Priestley had "accidentally heard of your being in want of a Minister"; this may refer to Worthington's retirement in 1767, or with somewhat more probability to the close of Harrison's ministry in 1769. After expressing the hope that those for whose benefit he writes are "not insenceable of the decay of the Dissenting Cause in general & yt this has been the case in all those places where they have left the old Principles of our forefathers," he makes an appeal in form. "You yt are the older part of the Congregation are entrusted *by Christ*, to make choice of one of whom may depend much." Hence he with solemn adjuration begs "that you refuse making Choice of any Minister however or by whom recommended till he openly & before God declare yt he is neither Arian or Socinian." Other doctrinal requirements are specified, but this is the main point. By way of postscript he writes "N.B. I desire this Letter may be read before heads of the People at a convenient opportunity"; adding, "if you should be fast for a Supply some Lords Day I could assist for one day but no more"; and closing with this suggestion about a Minister, "I know of one you might try."

The terms Arian and Socinian figuring in this letter are not employed in any strict technical sense. Arian, in the eighteenth century, denoted those who acknowledged our

Lord's pre-existence and his agency in creation and in atonement, while denying his essential deity. Socinian was the name given to those who, denying our Lord's pre-existence, assigned to him no nature but the human; these points, no doubt, are features of the system of Socinus, which in other respects, that of worship, and of Christ's present relation to the divine government of the world, had at this period no access to the minds of the so-called Socinians.

Timothy Priestley was not, despite his urgent intervention, consulted by the Hale congregation in the choice of a Minister. In the diary of Isaac Worthington, senior, of Altrincham, occurs the entry: "January 27th 1769. At Warrington, to see Mr. Seddon about fixing us a minister at Hale." John Seddon was Rector of the Warrington Academy, and to his counsel was due the appointment of Robert Harrop.

Robert Harrop, born on 12 Jan. 1744 at Ashton-under-Lyne, entered Daventry Academy in 1761, and became in 1765 Minister at Mill Brow and Greenacres. He began in 1769 his ministry of forty-six years at Hale Chapel. He was not afraid of labour, for during thirty-six of those years (1777 to 1813) he did duty also at Cross Street, Cheshire, now known as Sale. On 3 Feb. 1788, he opened the Sunday School at Hale, of which an account follows; till 1821 the old Schoolhouse provided in 1740 by Silas Sidebottom was its place of meeting.

Whatever may have been the theology which he brought from Daventry, and which coloured his earliest ministry, undoubtedly the theological views of Robert Harrop, at Hale, were originally of the Arian type prevailing throughout the Provincial Meeting till the death of Dr. Barnes in 1810; but in the article of religious worship, as usual with the later Arians, prayer was offered to the Father alone.

Wisely considering the changing needs of the district Harrop projected a movement for a daughter Chapel at Altrincham. Under his auspices Shaw's Lane Chapel, Altrincham was opened avowedly as a Unitarian Chapel on

8 Sept. 1814. Resigning Sale, Harrop became pastor of "the united societies of Hale and Altrincham." This double charge he resigned in the following year, remaining at Hale. Harrop's Register of Baptisms (preceded by entries of Baptisms copied from the Diary of his predecessor, Hugh Worthington) is at Somerset House; since his time, no Baptismal Register has been kept. He lived to his ninety-first year, dying on 8 Sept. 1834, and was buried at Shaw's Lane Chapel (see p. 24). By his marriage with Ann Worthington he had a son, Isaac, who lived till 1845, and a daughter, Mary (d. 1854) who married Hugo Worthington. Harrop was succeeded in the joint charge by William Jevons.

The following are the succeeding Ministers of Hale with Altrincham; all of them personally known to the present writer:—

William Jevons was born on 2 Jan. 1794 at Old Swinford, Worc. He studied at Glasgow University (1810-12) and took his divinity course (1812-15) at Manchester College, then at York, under Charles Wellbeloved. Hale with Altrincham was his first settlement, which extended from January 1816 to Feb. 1819. Leaving Hale on the latter date, he became Minister at Walthamstow from May 1819 to Feb. 1821, when he retired from the Ministry. His "Systematic Morality," 2 vols. 1827 invokes no sanctions but those of "natural religion." He reached his eightieth year, dying on 14 June 1873. He was buried in the graveyard of the Ancient Chapel, Toxteth Park, Liverpool. By his marriage in 1817 with Fanny Worthington, of Altrincham, he had a family of two sons and three daughters. His successor at Hale was Charles Wallace.

Charles Wallace, M.A., was born on 15 Dec. 1796 at Dudley, where his father, Robert Wallace (son of a Dumfriesshire farmer), was a pawnbroker, who gave three sons to the Unitarian ministry. Charles studied at Glasgow University, 1813 to 1817, taking his M.A. in the latter year, and repairing for his divinity course (1817-19) to Manchester College, at York, under Charles Wellbeloved. His ministry

at Hale with Altrincham began on his leaving College in the middle of 1819 and (with a break in 1848-9) lasted till his retirement in 1856. In 1821 a new Schoolroom for the Sunday School was built (see p. 34).

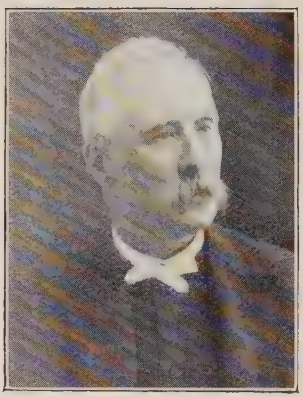
Wallace's valuable article on the history of Hale Chapel appeared in the *Christian Reformer* in 1852.

In 1852 Hale Chapel was registered for marriages. The first marriage was that of Brooke Herford (afterwards D.D.) to Hannah, eldest daughter of William Hankinson, of Hale Bank, on 20 June 1852. The bride planted ivy round the Chapel walls.

It was also in 1852 that interments began in the Chapel yard; the first grave being at the S.W. corner of the Chapel, abutting on the steps, then existing, to the gallery. The graveyard was later enlarged by the purchase (in 1871-2) of a portion of the adjoining field. In this graveyard now lie the remains of three Ministers connected with the district in various ways, Richard Pilcher, Dr. Brooke Herford, Dr. George Vance Smith. There are moreover four gravestones of earlier date than 1852; these (which include the gravestone of the former Minister, Robert Harrop) were removed from Shaw's Lane in consequence of its replacement by Dunham Road Chapel in 1872.

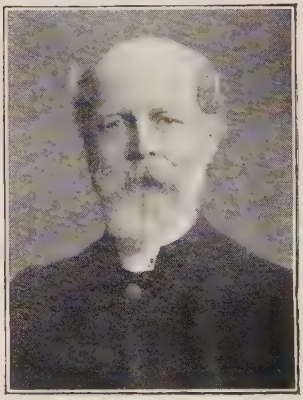
Wallace was a staunch, outspoken, jovial divine of the old school, a frank embodiment of the time-honoured watchword: "civil and religious liberty all the world over"; he was excellent company, warm and impulsive, and in a moment of excitement he would rub his deeply pock-marked visage, as if to grate a piece off his fingers. In 1856 he retired to Hampton, near Evesham, Worc., and died there on 27 July 1859. He was buried in the graveyard of Oat Street Chapel, Evesham. By his marriage (in 1840) with Sarah, youngest daughter of William Hampson, of Dukinfield, he left no issue; one baby boy had died in infancy. His widow, a gracious, tender-hearted old lady, who died in 1890, bequeathed a sum of £1,000 in trust for the benefit of the ministry at Hale.

Rev. T. Lloyd Jones
(1878—1882).



Rev. C. Davis Badland
(1883—1885).

Rev. J. Crowther Hirst
(1885—1898).



Rev. Thomas Robinson
(1899—1902).

Wallace's eldest brother, Robert, succeeded Wellbeloved in 1840 as divinity professor at Manchester New College, then removed from York to Manchester, and was made Principal in 1842. James Cowdan Wallace, his other brother, was the author of numerous hymns.

James Thornely Whitehead was born on 14 Nov. 1834 at Ainsworth, where his father was Minister for many years. Educated (1850-56) at Manchester New College, which in his time removed from Manchester to London, he came under the influence of John James Tayler and James Martineau. Hale with Altrincham was his first ministerial settlement, in 1857. His stay was of no long duration, yet his influence at Altrincham was fruitful both in fostering a scientific ardour (he was said to have run about the fields of Hale with his butterfly net) and in the cultivation of musical taste and acquirement. In 1859 he succeeded his father at Ainsworth, and remained there till October 1870. He then succeeded Robert Brook Aspland (*d.* 1869) at Hackney, in the Unitarian Church, Paradise Fields (since known as the New Gravel Pit Chapel). He retired from this charge in 1891, and died on 22 Oct. 1898. He wrote a "Historical Sketch" of the Hackney congregation (1889), and in conjunction with Russell and Basil Martineau brought out the musical edition of "Hymns of Praise and Prayer," contributing many hymn tunes. By his marriage (1861) with Anna Maria Whitfield, daughter of John Armstrong, of Manchester, he had a son and two daughters.

George Browne Brock, J.P., was born on 6 Nov. 1805 at Moretonhampstead. He received his ministerial training from Henry Acton, Minister at George's Meeting, Exeter, from 1822 to 1843. He had already held pastorates at Gloucester (1831-6), Swansea (1837-54), and Exeter (1854-60) before entering on the charge of Hale with Altrincham. His retention of this charge was brief, extending only from 31 March to 28 July 1861. He then left the ministry for reasons of business, in which his career was successful. After being appointed J.P. at Swansea, he was Mayor of that borough for the year 1867-8. He died on 30 Oct. 1886, and was

buried in the Swansea Cemetery. By his marriage (1838) with Elizabeth Anne, daughter of Christopher James, of Swansea, he had two sons and four daughters. His daughter Emma became the wife of John Edmundson Manning, whose valuable and erudite life in the ministry terminated in 1910 when he was Tutor in the Unitarian Home Missionary College.

James Gammell, B.A., was born on 16 May 1836 in London. He was educated for the Congregational ministry at New College, London, and graduated B.A. at the London University. A change of theological views had disturbing effects on an over-sensitive nature. His only ministerial charge was at Hale with Altrincham, but the strain was too much for him. He held office only from June to October 1862. Subsequently he conducted schools at Nottingham, at Brighton, and at Wellington, N.Z.

Andrew McCreight Creery, B.A., was born in the North of Ireland in 1826. Educated at Trinity College, Dublin, for the ministry of the Church of Ireland, he graduated B.A. in 1849. Ordained deacon in 1850, priest in 1851, he held the curacy of Ballinderry, Co. Antrim from 1850 to 1853. The progress of his thoughts on religion led him at length to turn to the Unitarian ministry, and after six years' ministry at Stockport (1857-63) he became Minister of Hale with Altrincham in 1863. His ministry here lasted about five years, 1863 to 1868, when he removed to Buxton. There he remained till 1883, when he published his "Reasons for Giving Up the Unitarian Ministry," and again conformed. In his subsequent career he was for a short time (1894-5) curate-in-charge during a vacancy in the vicarage at Kirkby Ireleth, Lanc.

Edward Samuel Howse, B.A., was born on 17 Feb. 1837 at Bath. His father, Henry Edward Howse, was a leading layman of the old General Baptist body, and compiler of its hymn-book. Educated at Manchester New College, London (1856-62) and graduating B.A. at the London University in 1858, he was Hibbert Scholar and Fellow

(1860-4), and went as a Hibbert Scholar to Göttingen (Oct. 1862 to July 1863). His first settlement was at Renshaw Street, Liverpool, as assistant to John Hamilton Thom (Oct. 1864 to Oct. 1865). He then ministered for two years at Southport (1865-67) being its first regular minister. His ministry at Hale with Altrincham began in July 1868, and ended, as regards Hale, in 1877; as regards Altrincham in August 1882.

In 1878, Hale, the mother congregation, had again its own sole Minister, and Altrincham, the daughter, took its own wise course. Hale was in fact becoming something like a residential suburb for Manchester, and felt capable of sustaining a friendly independence. It may suffice therefore to say that for Howse the new Chapel in Dunham Road, Altrincham, was opened in 1872; and that, leaving Altrincham in 1882, he was subsequently Minister at Bournemouth (1886-7), and at Hampstead (1889-90); retiring in 1890 to the family residence, Lyncombe Hall, near Bath, where he died on 12 May 1921.

He married (1874) Amy, daughter of Holbrook Gaskell, J.P.

His younger brother, Sir Henry Howse, was President of the College of Physicians.

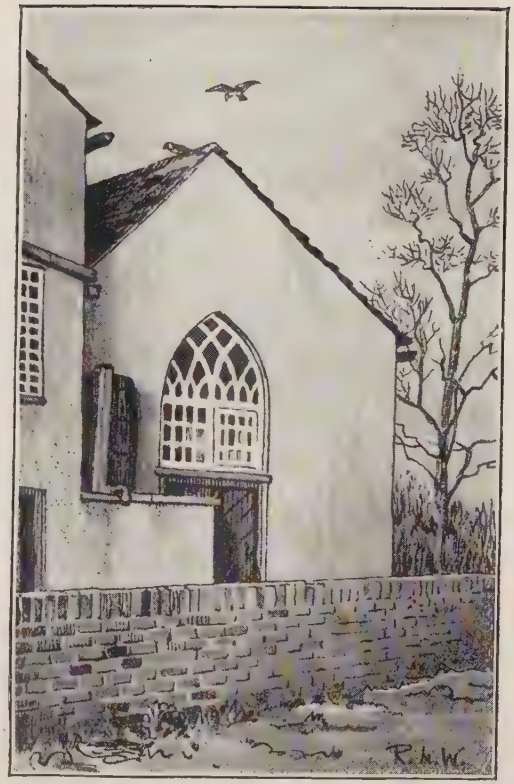
The following are the Ministers of Hale apart from Altrincham.

Thomas Lloyd Jones was born on 17 May 1847 at Felinfach in the Vale of Aeron. From Carmarthen College (1869-71) he proceeded to Manchester New College (1871-7). He became Minister at Hale on New Year's Day, 1878, and retained his charge till the last day of December 1882. During his short but energetic ministry, the New School was built in the village, and various institutions were established (see p. 35). On 1 Jan. 1883 he became Minister to the Poor at Liverpool, and continued in this with great assiduity, geniality and success, till his death on 18 Oct. 1917. The new Mission Buildings in Mill Street, Liverpool, form a monument of his devoted labours. He married in 1905 Gertrude, daughter of Thomas Oxton, of Liverpool.

Charles Davies Badland, M.A., was born on 17 April 1847 at Kidderminster. He was educated at Manchester New College (1868-73) and Heidelberg (1873-4), and graduated B.A. at London University (1870) and M.A. (1874). After having ministered at Derby (1875-80), he became Minister at Hale, on 7 Jan. 1883, and held this charge till 29 Mar. 1885. Thereafter he was Minister at Lewes (1886-95); at Clifton (1896-8); at Great Yarmouth with Filby (1900-02); and at Whitchurch, Salop (1902-5). He then lived in retirement at Kidderminster, till his death on 11 July 1910. He married (1883) Emily Ann Bell, of London.

Joseph Crowther Hirst was born on 15 Feb. 1848 at Huddersfield. He was trained (1868-71) at the Unitarian Home Missionary Board (now College). He had filled four pastorates before coming to Hale, viz. Clover Street, Rochdale (1871-4); Scarborough (1874-7); Cheltenham (1878-82); and Dewsbury (1882-5). His ministry at Hale began in June 1885, and was continued till 1898. During his ministry the old Vestry (a detached structure) was removed, and the more commodious new Vestry and picturesque Lych Gate were erected from designs by Mr. P. S. Worthington, F.R.I.B.A. Removing to Gateacre in 1898, he held this charge till his death on 6 January 1919. Some of his historical work appears in this volume; his two books "Half-hours with the Parables" have been very useful to Sunday School Teachers; he wrote also "Hiram Greg," 1881 (a novel), "Crozet Joe: A Story of Adventure," 1895; and "Is Nature Cruel?" 1899. By his marriage (1872) with Hannah Oakes, daughter of Samuel Peake Knight, of Nottingham, he had a son, Tom Oakes.

Thomas Robinson, son of William Robinson, of Padiham (an early alumnus of the Unitarian Home Missionary Board, now College) was born in September 1852. He studied at Manchester New College, London (1878-83), and became Minister successively at Dover (1883-7); Capland Street Mission, London (1887-93); and Swansea (1893-98). His ministry at Hale began in 1899, and extended to 1902.



The Day School

Mr. John Clarke.

After a short period in 1906 as Assistant Minister at Hindley, he, owing to failing health, retired from the ministry. He achieved considerable success as a lecturer on various topics of natural history and physical science. In the "Helper" for 1899, and succeeding years, he published a series of valuable Lessons on Nature, with illustrations from his own pencil. He died on 10 June 1923.

Arthur Leslie Smith, B.A., son of Edwin Smith, Minister of Upper Brook Street Chapel, Manchester, was educated at Manchester New College (1882-8), and graduated B.A. (1885) at the London University. After serving as assistant Minister at Hampstead (1888-9) and filling pastorates at Hinckley (1889-93), and Maidstone (1893-5), he acted as assistant Missionary at the Hamilton Road Mission, 1901). In 1902 he entered on his ministry at Hale, remaining for about five years, and leaving in 1907. His later career took him to Belper (1909-18), and in 1918 he began his present ministry at Hunslet, near Leeds.

William George Price, born at Kidderminster, was educated (1889-94) at the Unitarian Home Missionary College, where he gained the Gaskell Scholarship, and Owens College, Manchester. His first settlement was at Hinckley (1894-1904), whence he removed to Stalybridge (1904-9).

He entered on his ministry at Hale in 1909 and remained in charge till 1917. During the Great War he served as R.A.M.C. from 1916 to 1919. His present pastorate at West Kirby began in 1920.

Joseph Kettlestring Wain is the present Minister of Hale, where he entered on its duties in 1918. He had previously been Missionary of the Lewin's Mead Mission, Bristol (1889-1900). Here his work among the poor brought him royal recognition; in obedience to royal command he appeared before Queen Victoria at Windsor Castle. Thereafter he was Minister successively at Trowbridge (1900-9), and Scarborough (1909-17), where he had experience of the bombardment of this port during the Great War.

BICENTENNIAL CELEBRATIONS.

Bicentennial celebrations, in commemoration of the 200th anniversary of the opening of the Chapel were introduced on Thursday 4th Oct. 1923 by a Social gathering in the Schoolroom, which brought together past and present members of the Congregation and the Sunday School.

On Saturday 6th Oct., a religious service was held in the Chapel at 3-30, the preacher being Rev. Henry Gow, B.A., D.D., Warden of Manchester College, Oxford. After tea, a public meeting in the Schoolroom was presided over by Mr. Albert Nicholson, when a Historical Address was given by the present writer, other speakers being Revs. John Edwardes Evans, M.A., vicar of Ringway, Arthur Holland Biggs, M.A., LL.M., minister of Altrincham, Joseph Wain, *pastor loci*, John Moore, of Hale, and Philip M. Oliver, B.A., C.B.E. (now M.P.).

On Sunday 7th Oct., morning service was conducted in the Chapel by Rev. Laurence Pearsall Jacks, M.A., D.D., LL.D., D.Litt., Principal of Manchester College, Oxford, and Editor of the "Hibbert Journal," who preached to a crowded congregation. In the evening, the Chapel was again filled, when devotions were led by the *pastor loci*, and the present writer preached.

THE SUNDAY SCHOOL.

THE Sunday School was opened on Sunday 3 February 1788. This is proved by entries in an old Memorandum Book and an old Account Book, relating to the School. The meeting of Subscribers on Wednesday, 5 Nov. 1788, did not, as once supposed, originate the School. A movement for the establishment of Sunday Schools was evidently operating in the district in the year 1788, and Hale Sunday School was one of the earliest opened. It is probable that the Warrington Sunday School was opened on the same date; its accounts show that a purchase of books for that purpose was made on Friday 1 Feb. 1788. At Manchester also the Sunday School was opened in 1788.

The scholars first met in the Schoolhouse provided for the Day School (see p. 18) by Silas Sidebottom in 1740. His successor, Robert Harrop (see p. 22) added to this example in the promotion of education, and the Sunday School was managed by members of his congregation. The names which appear first in this connection are those of Charles Hankinson, a tanner in a large way of business at Hale Bank; Isaac Worthington, "for more than fifty years steward to the property of the Dunham family"; George Worthington; William and Benjamin Whitelegg. The School, however, was not intended to be a mere feeder of the Chapel. Its object was "the benefit of poor children in Hale and the neighbouring townships." It was supported partly by subscriptions, partly by collections in the Chapel. Persons in no way associated with the Chapel or its services helped to maintain the School. Among these may be mentioned the then Lord Stamford, Sir John Leicester, and Thomas Whitaker (see pp. 2, 10), curate-in-charge of Ringway Chapel.

At first it would appear that the School (as at Warrington) was not open to every child who might apply. In the

old Memorandum Book the first entry is headed: "A list of the Subscribers, and how many Children every subscriber is liable to Recomend, by order of the committee that every 2/6 subscribed is liable to Recomend one Child." Later we have a list of the children nominated, in one column, and the names of those recommending them, in another. There are no means of ascertaining how far the scholars showed by their attendances, their appreciation of the privileges conferred upon them, until the year 1793. In that year we have a summary of the attendances for each Sunday; and the average is not good.

Even in the earliest days of Sunday Schools, counter-attractions were apt to draw young people away. In the accounts of the first year, under date Sunday 21 Sept., we have the entry: "Allowed 34 Children 1d. each for not going to Bowdon Wake—0. 2. 10." Again, under date Sunday 2 Nov.: "allowed 51 Children one penny each for not going to Ringway Wake—0. 4. 3." The Wakes were evidently seductive to the youthful temperament. When we recall their character, we cease to wonder that the School Committee took measures to keep the children from them. Frequently they were scenes of debauchery and excess. Bull-baiting at Bowdon was still a living memory a hundred years after the opening of the School. Boxing took place within a few minutes' walk of the Schoolhouse; more than one family of famous boxers resided in the township of Hale. It was well that the Sunday School should discourage the frequenting of scenes where degrading sights would be witnessed and degrading companionships formed.

The School was held morning and evening, and the accounts present many entries for candles. From the Sunday School funds were paid fees at the Day School (at the rate of 2/- each, per quarter) for six or eight boys and girls. The Day School master was also paid to teach singing, at 1/- a lesson. Instruction in the Sunday School was given by paid teachers, at the rate of 1/6 a day. The first of these teachers was one Pattinson, who began his duties on the opening day. In the same year, Wainwright, the

Hale Chapel Sunday School, 1923.

master of the Day School, assisted, thus beginning a custom which was followed by later masters, Hill, Thomas Royle and Crampton.

John Clarke, the last of these, received his appointment as master of the Day School by vote of the ratepayers in 1846. He had previously conducted a small school at Peel-causeway, near the place of his birth. On settling at Hale Barns he, for a short time, gave voluntary service in the parish Sunday School at Ringway, but being attracted by the ministry of Charles Wallace, he attended Hale Chapel, and then began a career, which lasted for 45 years, as voluntary teacher in the Sunday School. On his death in 1892, the Day School was closed in favour of a National School which had been established in the village. Though a cripple, owing to spinal trouble in boyhood, Clarke was a model schoolmaster, punctual, methodical and thorough. The village clocks were set by the sound of his school bell; and it was his proud boast that he never had occasion through illness, to give his school a holiday, or to absent himself from Sunday School. His grave is in the Chapel yard.

Among the Sunday Scholars entered in 1794 was James Moore, born 20 Nov. 1789, and baptised by Robert Harrop. In after-life he removed to Stockport, from Stockport to Loughborough, and thence to London, where he founded the still existing tea company of Moore Brothers. His son, Sir John Voce Moore, born in Stockport, was Lord Mayor of London in 1899. It may be of interest to note that the present Secretary of the Sunday School, Harold Brooks Moore, related on his father's side to this Lord Mayor of London, can claim also on his mother's side kinship with a Recorder of London, Sir Charles Hall (nephew to the late Mr. John Hall, for many years the devoted Secretary and Treasurer of Hale Chapel).

The School has well maintained its family connections. The names of successive generations, proceeding from its first scholars frequently appear on its Roll; while to-day its

Superintendent and indefatigable worker, Robert Harrop Wolff, is the great-grandson of its Founder.

Many of the older Sunday Schools, at the beginning of their career, aimed at little more than supplying elementary training in reading, writing and ciphering to children deprived of the means or opportunity of attending a Day School. Here, however, religious instruction held a prominent place from the first. This is apparent from the character of the books in use. In 1788 and 1789, scholars were supplied with Bibles, with copies of Dr. Watts' "Divine and Moral Songs," and of William Turner's "Abstract of the Bible" (to which the present writer gratefully owns his early indebtedness). Each scholar was furnished with a copy of a Catechism, which is not more fully described; but was probably, as at Warrington, where the arrangements largely correspond with those at Hale, "Mr. Mottershead's Catechism." The "Divine and Moral Songs" were evidently employed as a class-book; since in 1790 there was an outlay of 10/- on "Mrs. Trimer's (*sic*) Comments" thereon. The "Reading Made Easy," the "First Book," and various spelling-books, likewise figure in the lists.

In his article in the *Christian Reformer*, Charles Wallace states that "for causes of which no record is left, the School was broken up in 1815 until the year 1821." No register, however, exists after 1813 until the School was re-opened. When the break occurred, about 60 young people were in fairly regular attendance. Possibly there is a connection between the slackening of the work here and the project of Shaw's Lane Chapel, opened in 1814. According to the testimony of an old lady given in 1888, she and half-a-dozen companions, all living in the neighbourhood of Warburton Green, used to go every week to Shaw's Lane Sunday School, which was looked upon as the proper one for the young people connected with Hale Chapel.

When the School was revived in 1821, it occupied a new home. In that year, a Schoolroom with stabling below was put up in the south-eastern corner of the Chapel-yard, and at the same time a gallery was added to the Chapel.

The stabling was for the accommodation of the horses of worshippers coming from distant homes, an arrangement copied from the older vestry, below which were horses' stalls. The gallery, gained by an outside staircase, a brick structure, with stone steps, and a handrail, was chiefly for the use of the scholars. At a later date this gallery was tenanted only by the choir, with violin accompaniment. This lasted till the introduction of a small harmonium, about 1860, played by Miss Valentine. When a new organ was placed (1882) in Dunham Road Chapel, by the generosity of Mr. James Worthington of Sale Hall, the superseded organ, placed at Mr. Worthington's disposal, was by him transferred to Hale.

During the first half-year after the revival great vigour was shown, about 120 names appearing on the register; and this state of things lasted for a long while. The system of paying at least the principal teacher was continued; gradually members of the congregation began to give voluntary assistance, and during the nearly sixty years in which this Schoolroom was in use, a succession of able and devoted workers gave their services freely to the boys and girls who gathered round them. In course of time this building proved insufficient for existing needs. Its position, too, at some distance from the high road and the chief centre of population, was found to tell against social meetings during the week.

Accordingly, in 1880, a handsome new structure was placed on a site adjoining the Sidebottom School in the village. Those who benefit by it owe a debt of gratitude to Miss Valentine, whose generosity furnished a considerable proportion of the necessary funds; to the then Minister, Thomas Lloyd Jones, for his zeal and earnest interest; as well as to a number of other friends. In 1886 an important addition to the usefulness and convenience of the premises was made by the construction of class-rooms and offices at the back; and it is worth remembering that in their erection was employed a portion of material derived from the School building of 1821 in the Chapel-yard, wherein many of those interested in the building of 1880 had received their religious

training. That building of 1821, having become unsafe as well as useless, had been cleared away in 1885.

There are several useful institutions connected with the School: the Penny Bank; a good and well used Library; a Singing Class, wherein the members of the Chapel choir receive training and practice; last, but not least, a Band of Hope, which during each winter provides fortnightly entertainments, materially helping to brighten the life of the village, and a means of guiding many to pure and improved modes of life.

In 1910 further extensions were made under the direction of Mr. F. B. Dunkerley, F.R.I.B.A. The southern frontage was brought forward, providing much needed platform accommodation, with cloak-rooms and lavatories in the basement. A covered way was also erected, by which convenient access could be obtained to the adjoining Old School.

Of our old scholars, two brothers have given themselves to the work of the ministry; namely, John Moore, minister at Swinton (1878-91) and at Hindley (1891-1909); and Richard Clarke Moore, minister at Horwich from 1894 till his death in 1906. Many others are so filling their places in the world as to deserve and command all respect. In this connection it is pleasing to recall that in the early eighteenth century Hale had furnished for the ministry those of its sons named on p. 13, and in addition a Glasgow graduate, Joseph Hankinson, M.A., whose education began in the elder Worthington's school at Dean Row. He was licensed by the Cheshire Classis in 1726, and died on 29 April 1731, soon after his appointment as minister at Wirksworth.

In closing this account of the Sunday School, it is worthy of record that on Thursday, 4th October, 1923, a presentation was made to Miss Wolff, for fifty years a devoted Teacher in the Sunday School, founded by her great-grandfather, Robert Harrop.

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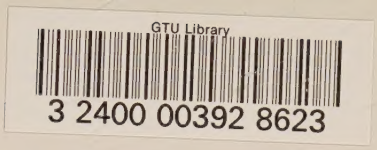

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